a decision favouring establishment of Circuit Benches of the Orissa High Court at Berhampur, Sambalpur or Bolangir. The High Court of Orissa, in the full Court, does not favour setting up of Benches. The Court is of the considered view that hearing of cases in circuit would be more burdensome and harassing for the litigants and is not conducive to proper administration of justice. The suggestion of the State Government is also not favoured as they do not meet general important principles and criterion evolved by Jaswant Singh Commission set up to consider establishing of Benches of High Courts.

Confiscation of Smuggled Gold

15. SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state the quantity and the value of smuggled gold confiscated by various Government agencies during the last six months?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): The quantity and value of contraband gold seized throughout the country by various Government agencies under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 during the last 6 months from January to June, 1991 are given in the table below:—

Quantity in Kgs.	*Value (Rs. in crores)*
2926*	102.24*

*Figures are provisional.

Merger of Regional Rural Banks with Commercial Banks

16. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to merge the regional rural banks with the Commercial Banks; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

IMF Loan

17. SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN :

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN :

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA :

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHI :

SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have sought a loan of seven Billion U.S. Dollars from the International Monetary Fund (IMF);

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the terms and conditions of this loan and other facilities to be availed of from the I.M.F.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) No, Sir. However some preliminary discussions are being held with the IMF to explore the possibilities of assistance to reduce the strain on the balance of payments.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Vacant Posts of Judges in Supreme Court and High Courts

18. SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of vacancies of Judges in the Supreme Court and different High Courts as on 30 June, 1991, Court-wise; and

(b) the number of vacancies filled up, if any by the Government after the notification for the General Elections was issued and the details thereof, Court-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) A statement showing the vacancies of Judges in the Supreme Court and the High Courts as on 30-6-1991 is enclosed.

(b) None.

STATEMENT

Vacancies of Judges as on 30-6-1991

Sl. No.	*High Court*	*Vacancies*
1.	Allahabad	5
2.	Andhra Pradesh	5
3.	Bombay	7
4.	Calcutta	4
5.	Delhi	1
6.	Gauhati	2
7.	Gujarat	..
8.	Himachal Pradesh	1
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	..
10.	Karnataka	4
11.	Kerala	2
12.	Madhya Pradesh	6
13.	Madras	2
14.	Orissa	..
15.	Patna	6
16.	Punjab & Haryana	1
17.	Rajasthan	3
18.	Sikkim	1
	Total	50
I	Supreme Court	3

Price Rise

19. SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN:

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN:

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE:

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE:

SHRI CHITTA BASU:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the latest consumer price index for essential commodities;

(b) whether the price rise continues unabated;

(c) whether the Government propose to bring down the prices to July, 1990 level within 100 days as promised;

(d) if so, the specific steps proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) and (b) The latest All-India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI) (Base: 1982=100) is 204 for May, 1991. The up-trend in prices manifest in the last financial year still persists. The CPI has increased by 1.5 per cent during the current financial year upto May, 1991 as against the increase of 2.8 per cent during the corresponding period last year. The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) (Base: 1981-82=100) has increased by 2.0 per cent upto June 22, 1991, as against 3.9 per cent during the corresponding period last year.

(c) to (e) The Government attaches the highest priority to control inflation as it hurts everybody, particularly the poor whose incomes are not indexed. Various steps have been taken in this regard which include